

White County Planning Commission
Public Hearing Minutes
January 28, 2019

Those present were Larry Freeman, Charlie Thomas, John Yarbrough, Linda Dixon, Donna Burke and Brad Ash

Staff: John Sell and Harry Barton

- I. Call to Order: Chairman Thomas called meeting to order.
- II. Review of Agenda: Chairman Thomas asked if there were any changes to the agenda. Chairman Thomas said there were no changes to the agenda. Chairman Thomas opened the public hearing.
- III. Public Hearing /Land Use Change/Planning Commission Recommendation
 - a. **Application of Sheetal Pawar** to request a conditional use permit at 4623 Hwy 254, Cleveland, Georgia 30528. Tax map and parcel 064-054. Total acreage is 8.28 acres. Proposed use is for public, private and parochial schools and related education institutions not offered for profit.
Present use is C-1 Community Commercial.

Chairman Thomas explained the procedures for the public hearing.

Applicant Ms. Sheetal Pawar 7146 Belcrest Dr. Johns Creek Ga. 30097 was present.

Harry Barton gave a summary of the application. Harry Barton said that the property currently is zoned C-1, located on Ga. State Route Hwy 254 is requesting a conditional use permit for Educational Academy.

Mr. Marco Lackington said that he is representing the Applicant and they are requesting a conditional use permit to place an Educational Academy. Mr. Lackington said the applicant found a place in White County with the conditions they are looking for that has a beautiful

creek . Mr. Lackington said the purpose for nonprofit , this is training school to learn how to be healthier through meditation, yoga practices and this is a nonprofit and is universal and it does not appeal to one religion, it does not discriminate, it is open to anyone who wishes to access. Mr. Lackington said it is open to anyone. Mr. Lackington handed to the Board a brochure of Pyramid Spiritual Science Academy information and program. Mr. Lackington said the building is a 33 by 33-foot roof structure that is open and people can sit on a mat to meditate or do yoga on this beautiful property. Mr. Lackington said the building would be open with a lot of windows to see out. Mr. Lackington said they are looking for a quiet place and this property is perfect. Mr. Lackington said they are planning to be good stewards of the land and community. Mr. Lackington said they plan to help people learn how to practice meditation. Mr. Lackington said that there are several of these place around the U. S. and the world.

Chairman Thomas asked, where is the closest facility like this to White County?

Mr. Lackington said that there is one in Houston Texas and North Carolina and they have purchased the land.

Chairman Thomas asked if there are any in Georgia?

Mr. Lackington said no. Mr. Lackington said these are the conditions we are looking for here in White County and this is a special place.

Chairman Thomas asked, how did you find this place?

Mr. Lackington said by driving, word of mouth, persistence, Craigslist and Facebook.

Chairman Thomas asked how many paid employee would they have?

Mr. Lackington said the caretaker would be the only employee and everyone else would be on a volunteer basis because it is a nonprofit.

Chairman Thomas asked how they would make the funds to pay an employee?

Mr. Lackington said that if you want to go there and learn about meditation and then, if want to you could contract a class. Mr. Lackington said that the structure would be hidden by trees and it is low in height.

Chairman Thomas asked how many parking spots are they planning?

Mr. Lackington said 25.

Chairman Thomas asked if the building/Pyramid would be enclosed?

Mr. Lackington said it is not necessarily a pyramid, we would say the roof is the pyramid and yes it will be enclosed.

Ms. Dixon asked how many people would you have at one time?

Mr. Lackington said not more than 50.

Mr. Yarbrough asked if the people attending would be housed on the property?

Mr. Lackington said no, but the caretaker would be on site.

Ms. Burke said that the plan shows the cafeteria to be twenty five hundred square feet.

Mr. Lackington said that they set a rough number and will just go by what code requires per person.

Ms. Burke asked what is an exhibit building?

Mr. Lackington said it is before you get into the pyramid and you walk around the site and mediation with nature.

Ms. Dixon asked what are the operation hours?

Mr. Lackington said normal hours are 8 am to 6 pm Monday through Friday and weekend would be a retreat with different hours.

Mr. Ash asked what is the typical age?

Mr. Lackington said 14, 15, 16-years old and up to old as you can be.

Ms. Burke asked if this strictly for meditation or is a school for meditation?

Mr. Lackington said it is realistic approach to good health with yoga, meditation and good practice on living.

Mr. Ash asked if they have online course to look at?

Mr. Lackington said not at this time.

Mr. Ash asked if they have an application to look at?

Mr. Lackington said they can provide one by e-mail.

Ms. Burke asked where is there one open now?

Mr. Lackington said Houston Texas.

Chairman Thomas asked if anyone else would like to make a comment?

Mr. Sreekanth Garla, Suwanee Ga. said the they looked at property in Blue Ridge Ga. and here in White County. Mr. Garla said that everything was so positive in White County. Mr. Garla said that this is the right place to help the community and grow together.

Mr. Ken Smith, 4536 Hwy. 254 Cleveland Ga, said that he lives across the road from this place and what is this, we do not know if they are going to be 100 , 150 or 300 people, we do not know. Mr. Smith said they are asking for thirty parking spots, what if four, fifteen passenger van show up? Mr. Smith said there is not any county water at this location. Mr. Smith said there is a lot of concern about septic tanks and drain fill. Mr. Smith said that part of this property is in the flood plain and where is all the storm water going? It is going into Mossy Creek. Mr. Smith said there is a big safety issue because the road at this location is a big safety issue, there are going to be wrecks at this location. Mr. Smith handed out design criteria for access on a Ga. DOT Hwy. Mr. Smith said that trucks and cars will have problems stopping when they are going 55 mile-per-hour. Mr. Smith said that he is concerned about school bus on this road. Mr. Smith said this just does not fit over there. Mr. Smith said there is country land and houses and barns. Mr. Smith said what about my property value, it this gets approved the value will go down. Mr. Smith said if they build a pyramid over there "my property value will

go down.” Mr. Smith said the biggest thing it is a safety issue because of the road to get in and out of the property. Mr. Smith said the biggest thing is this does not fit, no. Mr. Smith said why are these not all over the state?

Mr. Aruna Sastry, Engineer for project 350 Wood Slain, John Creek Ga., said that they are going to file an application with the Georgia Department of Transportation for access to the property. Mr. Sastry said they would not use the lower driveway only the upper drive.

Mr. Smith said that he suggests the board have the Georgia DOT look at it.

Harry Barton said that with any project in White County that adjoins Ga DOT highway , the owner must get a Ga DOT permit before any permits can be issued by White County.

Mr. Daniel Dorsey, 4537 Hwy 254 Cleveland Ga., said that he lives across the creek and we build out in the country because we are country folks and that is the way we like to keep it. Mr. Dorsey said that he did not want to look across the creek and see a business.

Ms. Lorie Bryson said she is part owner to the land and it has been up for sale four or five years and any of the neighbors could have bought it , because her Dad had it for sale. Ms. Bryson said that they put it on Facebook and that is how they found it. Ms. Bryson said they met with them many times and they are nice people and they mean no harm. Ms. Bryson said there are many people that are mad at us and have said some bad things and we are just trying to sell the land. Ms. Bryson said that according to Mr. Smith it will be dangerous to sell the property to anyone. Ms. Bryson said that her dad did build an upper driveway so you can see better. Ms. Bryson said it is her understanding that it is only about meditation.

Ms. Tammy Skelton, 4874 Hwy 254, Cleveland Ga., said that she is not mad at Ms. Bryson . Ms. Skelton said that she owns property next to it and it is a dangerous road. Ms. Skelton said you have to be very careful when you get to the top of the hill because cars are flying.

Ms. Skelton said that this is a farming community and it smells and it is beautiful property.

Chairman Thomas asked if anyone else has a comment, hearing none Chairman Thomas asked Mr. Lackington if he has any other comments?

Mr. Lackington said that he would like to add that they have a good team onboard to provide information to Ga. Dot and would work with them to have very safe access.

Ms. Burke asked if they have made contact with Ga. DOT?

Mr. Lackington said not yet, but they have the requirements.

Mr. John Sell said that the zoning would have to be first and then they would go through the plan review process. Mr. Sell explained the plan review process.

Mr. Lackington said that they will comply 100 percent to regulation.

Chairman Thomas closed the hearing.

- b. **Application of Robert Sloane** to request a conditional use permit at 41 Nugget Ridge, Sautee, Georgia 30571. Tax Map and Parcel 072-171. Total acreage is 1.75 acres. Proposed use is to place in "For rent by Owner" program.

Present use is R-1 Residential, Single-Family District.

Chairman Thomas opened the public hearing.

Harry Barton gave a summary of the application.

Mr. Robert Sloane, 334 Alpine Drive Sautee Ga. 30571, said that they found this property, after buying a house from Greg Crumley. Mr. Sloane said he bought this home with the intent of renting it out to help cover the cost.

Chairman Thomas asked Mr. Sloane how long has he owned the property?

Mr. Sloane said June of 2018.

Chairman Thomas asked Mr. Sloane if he bought the house with the intent of doing weekend rental?

Mr. Sloane said that he bought it to have it for his wife and himself to use as a fulltime residence or part time use because they live in Florida and spend half the year up here. Mr. Sloane said there are other homes in Panorama being used as weekend rentals.

Chairman Thomas asked Mr. Sloane how many homes in Panorama are being use as weekend rentals?

Mr. Sloane said that they looked at over a dozen homes and a lot of them were weekend rentals and they said they are weekend rentals. Mr. Sloane said that he talked to some of the neighbors about weekend rentals.

Mr. Peter Verkrusse, 132 Nugget Ridge Sautee Ga, 30571., said that there are six houses on Nugget Ridge and it is very quiet. Mr. Vekrusse said that when he spoke to Mr. Sloanne two years ago, he said he wanted to live there permanently. Mr. Verkrusse said that the 129 Nugget Ridge house is rented out over the weekend. Mr. Verkrusse said that he is against using the Sloane house for a weekend rental. Mr. Verkrusse said it will be very disturbing with all the people over there.

Mr. Steve Rosenberg said the he cut all the trees down and these weekenders are everywhere and they are here to raise cane. Mr. Rosenberg said they do not know when they are going to stop at night. Mr. Rosenberg said that he is against this application being approved.

Mr. Bill Thomas, 99 North Lake Drive Sautee Ga. 30571, said that he had two rental cabins in Panorama as an investment and it became a nightmare and he lives in Panorama. Mr. Thomas said he sold his rental cabins, because it was violating the neighbor's rights. Mr. Thomas said that at one time Panorama had about 14 rental cabins and there are only five now. Mr. Thomas said that the HOA is trying to get their covenants changed to not allow short term rentals in the

future. Mr. Thomas said if this is approved it opens up the possibility for other properties that are developed the do the same.

Ms. Burke asked how many rentals would be grandfathered in?

Mr. Thomas said four or five.

Mr. Dann Dickey, 3284 Panorama Drive Sautee Ga. 30571, said that he does not want everyone to think that Panorama is this big rental community for vacation homes.

Mr. Joe Walker, 365 Pristine Tr. Sautee Ga. 30571, said that he is on the HOA board and one of the largest complaints is from the rental properties.

Karen Robinson, 3160 Panorama Drive Sautee Ga. 30571, said she does not think he can get all the cars parked on his property. Ms. Robinson said that when they have the rental the street signs get stolen and there is a lot of noise.

Chairman Thomas asked Mr. Sloane if he had anything else to add?

Mr. Sloane said that all cars would have to park on his property. Mr. Sloane said the last five years he has not gotten any phone calls from the Sherriff because of any problems from one of his renters. Mr. Sloane said that they do screen and vet their renters. Mr. Sloane said that he has not had any problems with renters leaving trash on the property. Mr. Sloane said that he wants to build steps down to the river. Mr. Sloane said that he did not intend to cut trees on the property next to him.

Ms. Burke asked Mr. Sloane if he has a plat of his property and have you rented the house before?

Mr. Sloane said the he has not rented the property before.

Chairman Thomas closed this hearing.

- c. **Application of Robert Sloane** to request a conditional use permit at 334 Alpine Drive, Sautee, Georgia 30571. Tax Map and Parcel 058D-

123. Total acreage is 3.87 acres. Proposed use is to place in "For rent by Owner" program.

Present use is R-1 Residential, Single-Family District.

Harry Barton gave a summary of the application

Mr. Robert Sloane, 334 Alpine Drive, Sautee, Georgia, 30571, the property owner was present. Mr. Sloane said this property has community water. Mr. Sloane said that he has owned this property about two and half years.

Chairman Thomas asked Mr. Sloane if he has rented this property?

Mr. Sloane said yes for about one and half years.

Chairman Thomas asked if he has had any problems with renters on this property?

Mr. Sloane said that he bought the house to rent and also to stay in himself.

Chairman Thomas asked Mr. Sloane asked how many guests can stay in the house?

Mr. Sloane said 22 people. Mr. Sloane said that he bought the property from Mr. Berry and Mr. Berry said that it is ok to rent the home. Mr. Sloane said that he met with the HOA board on November 15, 2016 and they did not seem to have a problem with the part-time rental.

Mr. Freeman asked Mr. Sloane how many homes he owns in White County now?

Mr. Sloane said three.

Chairman Thomas asked if all of his homes in White County were in the weekend rental program?

Mr. Sloane said two are and he plans to place the house on Nugget Ridge in the rental program as well.

Ms. Dixon asked if there will be a problem with parking ?

Mr. Sloane said no.

Ms. Linda Hubbard, 32 Bern Vista Drive Sautee Georgia 30571, said they have become full-time residents there two years ago. Ms. Hubbard said that in 2018 the by-laws were amended to say that the lots and land shall be used for residential purposes only. Ms. Hubbard said that she is against approval of this application. Ms. Hubbard said that the covenant does not allow for rentals. Ms. Hubbard said that many times it was very loud across the street from their home. Ms. Hubbard said that they are parking in the no parking area. Ms. Hubbard said she is concerned about environmental health.

Mr. John Davis, 271 Mathahore Dive, Sautee Ga. 30571, handed a letter to Chairman Thomas. Mr. Davis said that all land in Swiss Colony is to be used exclusively for residential purposes. Mr. Davis said he is against the approval of the application. Mr. Davis said he was at the HOA meeting with Mr. Sloane and he did not hear anything pertaining to short-term rentals. Mr. Davis said that Mr. Sloane talked about leasing. Mr. Davis said it has been very loud some of the time.

Mr. Tom Sansome, 239 Bern Vista Sautee Georgia, 30571, said he is concerned about the septic systems, because there could be up to 22 people there at one time.

Ms. Sharan Windsor, 257 Interlochen Ct. Sautee Ga. 30571, said that the road is narrow. Ms. Windsor said that everyone thinks this is a lodge. Ms. Windsor said she does not want to see this approved.

Chairman Thomas asked Mr. Sloane if he had any other comments?

Mr. Sloane said that his home is one of the first homes on Alpine Drive. Mr. Sloane said that before he purchased the house he drove around in Swiss Colony and there were several signs of homes and cabins for rent.

Mr. Sloane said he did not say lease at the HOA meeting, said weekend rentals. Mr. Sloane said that the property has three septic systems and he has been in contact with Environment Health.

Chairman Thomas adjourned the public hearing.

IV. Citizens Comments- None

V. Adjournment - Motion made to adjourn by Ms. Dixon, seconded by Mr. Yarbrough. Motion was unanimously approved.